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MARIA CONTRERAS-SWEET, SECRETARY OF BUSINESS, TRANSPORTATION AND HOUSING AGENCY
JEFF MORALES, DIRECTOR
ROBERT W. SASSAMAN, DISTRICT 7 DIRECTOR

JUNE/JULY 2001



Inside Seven - a District 7 Edition of the CT News

ROSE CASEY AND RON KOSINSKI NAMED DEPUTY DISTRICT DIRECTORS



Rose Casey joins the executive team as the new Deputy District Director for Planning, Public Transportation and Local Assistance.



Ron Kosinski is appointed Deputy District Director for Environmental Planning after two decades of dedicated Caltrans service.

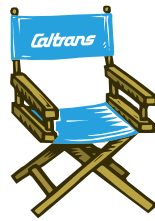
Congratulations to Rose Casey, newly appointed Deputy District Director for Planning, Public Transportation and Local Assistance; and Ron Kosinski, new Deputy District Director for Environmental Planning. The two professionals bring a myriad of experience and knowledge to their new posts and both have made valuable contributions to Caltrans throughout their careers.

Casey was the former Office Chief for Project Management Central Area for over four years and responsible for project management activities for all capital projects in central Los Angeles County. Her work involved project delivery, funding and partnering with local agencies and elected officials. Last March, she began her rotation program as part of the Executive Development Program in Sacramento. Her first assignment in Headquarters Transportation Planning as the assistant to Joan Sollenberger, Chief for the Division of Transportation Planning,

exposed her to planning issues from a statewide perspective for specific projects related to District 7 and Southern California. One such undertaking was initiating the Goods Movement Project Identification Team encompassing Southern Districts 7, 8, 11 and 12. "We are initially identifying critical goods movement-related improvements Caltrans can make to the freeway system," Casey said. "We will then address mid- and long-term improvements which will involve partnering with the ports, airports, local and regional agencies and private industries in order to improve goods movement regionally with a statewide impact. And much interest and support of efforts to facilitate goods movement has been expressed by Business, Transportation and Housing Secretary Maria Contreras-Sweet and Caltrans Director Jeff Morales."

In her position, Casey is responsible for Regional Planning and

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THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR

In June, the District Directors completed their final visit to all 12 Caltrans Districts. The visits took place over a 13-month period. This experience served an excellent purpose because it gave all the District Directors and Headquarters managers a chance to see what is being accomplished at each District throughout the state. And it gave each individual District the opportunity to expand on their programs and showcase their accomplishments. Local partners also were able to share their ideas. The last stop was Bishop (District 9) along Highway 395 on the eastern side of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. This was the first time that a new Director, Jeff Morales, made a visit to this location. He seemed very impressed by the differences and uniqueness of each District in their style, settings, challenges and achievements. Director Morales plans to continue holding the monthly Director's meetings at each District, not necessarily in each office building, but at various interesting locations within their boundaries. One of the possibilities for an upcoming District 7 meeting is at the port areas of Los Angeles or Long Beach, with an emphasis on goods movement, which is a big part of the economy of the state and the country. A summary of the future meeting will be published in an upcoming newsletter later this year.

The Governor's Transportation Congestion Relief Program (TCRP) has provided over \$5 billion in transportation funding. The District 7 portion is well under way. All of the improvement projects have been started and are on target for completion. I am very pleased with the program the Governor has initiated, particularly for the large portion of Southern California. Some of the projects include: the northbound High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane on the San Diego Freeway (I-405) between the Santa Monica Freeway (I-10) and the Ventura Freeway (I-101); widening of the Golden State Freeway (I-5) from the Orange County line toward Downtown Los Angeles, which includes an additional lane in each direction plus HOV lanes; and funding for HOV lanes on I-5 in the northern part of the District from the Ventura Freeway (134) to the Antelope Valley Freeway (14).

In addition, the Foothill Freeway (I-210, formerly Route 30) improvement project in LaVerne and Claremont is still on track. We anticipate completion in Los Angeles County in the summer of 2002. And the overall schedule for completion to tie into Route 15 through Districts 7 and 8 (a distance of some 20 miles) is on schedule for the end of 2002.

The E. Darwin Spartz Award for Value Analysis is given each year to an employee throughout the state who has demonstrated excellence in value engineering (see article in this newsletter). This year two outstanding individuals were recognized. I am very pleased that both employees are from District 7: Raja Mitwasi, Deputy District Director for Program and Project Management and Mel Hodges, Office Chief, Project Studies. I would like to congratulate them both for the hard work they have done in Value Analysis and for being recognized statewide for this prestigious award.

Vacation season is upon us. This is a good time for each of us to take some time off to relax with family and friends, get our internal "motors" revived and get ready to come back and push for the remaining projects to be delivered within this fiscal year, calendar year and beyond. And while you're out traveling, whether in this state, other states or even other countries, take a moment to look at what others are doing in the field of transportation. See how other people are getting around, what kind of transit is being utilized and take notice of what highways look like elsewhere. Maybe you'll discover something we might want to try here. Traveling always give us a chance to see and learn what others are doing. And last but not least, be safe out there. When you're in a different area, be extra alert and make safety your number one priority. I wish you all a happy and healthy vacation and look forward to seeing you all when you return. •

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. W. Sassaman".

ROBERT W. SASSAMAN
District Director

EMPLOYEES AWARDED FOR EXCELLENCE IN VALUE ANALYSIS

Contributing Writers Jamal El-Jamal and Mel Hodges

Value Analysis (VA) is a function-oriented, systematic, team approach used to analyze and improve the value in a product, facility design, system or service. It is a powerful methodology for solving problems and/or reducing costs while improving the performance/quality of a product, improvement project or process. The use of VA to improve the value of highway improvement projects has been demonstrated in all Caltrans districts since 1969. Historically, Caltrans has saved taxpayers between one and five million dollars for each project for which a VA study was conducted.

Recently, a panel of Caltrans and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) engineers selected two employees from District 7 who were nominated by the VA Team to receive the "E. Darwin Spartz Excellence in Value Engineering Award" for the 1999/2000 fiscal year. Generally, this honor is bestowed on only one employee statewide; however, due to the tremendous efforts of two individuals from District 7, it was decided that both be bestowed this prestigious award. The recipients are Raja Mitwasi, Deputy District Director, Program and Project Management and Melvin Hodges, Chief, Office of Project Studies. Hodges has directed the District 7 VA Program since 1995 and served as both VA Coordinator and Program Manager.

According to George Hunter, Headquarters VA Coordinator, E. Darwin Spartz initiated the program in 1969 and Caltrans was the first transportation department to implement the VA program. The award recognizes management's role and support. "A program such as this, without management support giving it credibility, doesn't work," said Hunter. "Much of the credit goes to Mel Hodges who started VA in the early 1990's. And it has flourished because of District Director Robert Sassaman, Raja Mitwasi and VA Program Coordinator Jamal El-Jamal. And credit also goes to District 7 for giving full support and having a great program as a result."



The prestigious Value Analysis awards are proudly presented. Left to right: Jamal El-Jamal, Raja Mitwasi, Robert W. Sassaman and Mel Hodges.

"District 7 is indeed fortunate, as well as deserving, to be the recipient of this award that has been a long time coming," said Sassaman. "Everyone who has taken part on the VA team at Caltrans is to be commended for their commitment to this important program. The involvement by everyone is what makes it work."

Mitwasi noted that the use of VA can be vital in problem solving. "I believe that the use of VA is a powerful tool that can be used to solve problems and/or reduce costs while improving performance and quality of a product," he said. "We all need to continue supporting the program in the District and we should perform VA studies at all phases from initiation through construction. I want to thank all of those who participated in VA studies and especially Jamal El-Jamal. I would also like to encourage everyone to participate in at least one of the studies. The teamwork spirit in District 7 brought us to where we are today."

Hodges said he was pleasantly surprised when notified that he would be a recipient of the award. "I was definitely surprised to receive this honor but also quite pleased because of the extensive effort I have put in over the past five years to bring a successful VA Program to

District 7," he said.

A VA study may be performed for a highway project at all phases from initiation through construction. The earlier the VA study is conducted, the greater the potential for identifying and implementing recommendations without affecting the schedule of the project. Since 1993, Caltrans has conducted 149 Value Analysis studies resulting in a cumulative savings to taxpayers of \$540 million for these projects. The National Highway System (NHS) Act of 1995 provided a much-needed boost in the number of VA study starts. This Act included a value engineering provision requiring the Secretary to "establish a program to require states to carry out a value engineering analysis for all projects on the NHS with an estimated total cost of \$25 million or more (construction, right of way and engineering costs)."

VA is becoming the way to do business at Caltrans. It is an effective tool to help build consensus with project stakeholders and transportation partners. The techniques of VA provide an excellent tool to focus on and solve the most difficult transportation issues using multi-disciplined teams for providing a broad per-

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Employee Recognition Program Awards

Two Employee Recognition Program (ERP) gold recognition plaques were presented recently along with \$500 awards each to John Ruff, Senior Transportation Surveyor and Philip Rushton, Transportation Engineer, Photogrammetry. Doug Failing, Chief Deputy District Director, presented the prestigious plaques to the two recipients for outstanding accomplishments and exemplary customer service.

John Ruff successfully created Surveys' Geographic Information System (GIS) database and the means of accessing it on the Caltrans computer network. This allows any user who has department network access to research and retrieve survey notes, record maps and more. Ruff accomplished this with a self-driven training program, spending much of his own time at training classes and self-study. This equates to research and development and "pioneering" the system from its inception. This new research tool will greatly reduce time necessary for researchers to retrieve record information. "Even though John's assignment is to develop and manage Surveys' GIS, he went the extra mile and has accomplished a straightforward program, database and conduit to access it," said William Stewart, Office Chief, Surveys North.

Philip Rushton was awarded for his high level of service and for the products he provided to the California Highway Patrol (CHP) during the recent Democratic National Convention. Rushton received a letter of acknowledgement and appreciation from the CHP expressing their gratitude for his hard work and commitment to Quality in Caltrans. Congratulations to John Ruff and Philip Rushton who are both to be commended for providing excellence in Caltrans customer service. •



John Ruff, center, proudly accepts award for outstanding accomplishment from William Stewart, left and Doug Failing, right.



Philip Rushton, center, is happy to accept his well-deserved award for outstanding service from William Stewart, left and Doug Failing, right.



Julie Inouye will be missed by all.

Caltrans Remembers Julie Inouye

Caltrans is saddened at the recent death of Julie Inouye, Office Chief, Transportation Management Center Support, who passed away May 23 at the age of 36 after a brave battle with cancer.

Inouye worked at Caltrans for 14 years and was responsible for providing technical support for the District's Transportation Management Center (TMC), Traffic Operations System (TOS) field elements and the TMC/TOS communications system and its associated hardware and software. Her responsibilities were to ensure that the TMC was fully supported from the field infrastructure (TOS elements and communications systems) to the central system. She was a team member in the development, implementation and operation of the Advanced Transportation Management System (ATMC) that currently operates in the District's TMC. District 7's TMC is one of the nation's premier transportation management systems utilizing technology to assist transportation agencies in dealing with congestion.

"Julie always approached her role and

responsibilities with enthusiasm and professionalism," said Frank Quon, Deputy District Director, Operations. "She consistently demonstrated her dedication to her work and staff to ensure that the Department delivers our services (mobility) to our customers at the highest level possible."

Co-workers are deeply saddened by her loss. "Julie conveyed her heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to all those who had worked with her and assisted her over her 14-year career at Caltrans," added Quon. "She will be greatly missed by all who had an opportunity to work with and for her."

Julie is survived by her parents, two brothers and her grandmother. Caltrans sends it sincere condolences to Julie Inouye's family. •

City Of Redondo Beach Recognizes Permit Engineer

Caltrans Permit Engineer Larry Tokuyama received the City of Redondo Beach Mayor's Commendation recently for his excellent work on a Pacific Coast Highway pavement improvement project. Tokuyama helped expedite the project

which involved inspection of sewer lines, storm drains and night work. He also worked on detour plans which helped mitigate congestion throughout the duration of the project.

The commendation reads: "It is a pleasure for me to extend this expression of our appreciation to you for your assistance in facilitating the resurfacing of Pacific Coast Highway through our City. The City Council and City Staff join me in commending your efforts in support of our continuous endeavor to improve our community." It was signed by Gregory C. Hill, Mayor, City of Redondo Beach.

"This letter of commendation is representative of the outstanding service that Larry provides to our local agency partners, developers and utility companies," said Hector Obeso, Chief, Office of Permits. Obeso noted that this is just one of the many kudos that Tokuyama and all of the District 7 permit inspectors have received for their outstanding work.

Tokuyama said, "I am very proud to have worked on this major improvement project and to partner with the City of Redondo Beach. I thank them for this honor." Caltrans extends its appreciation to Larry Tokuyama for his outstanding service to the communities Caltrans serves. Congratulations, Larry! •



Larry Tokuyama, left, receives Mayor's Commendation for outstanding service from Mayor Gregory C. Hill, City of Redondo Beach.

HIGHLAND PARK ROAD CREW EDUCATES STUDENTS



A group of adorable children from Multnomah Elementary School pose with Caltrans employees, left to right back row: Ray Villalobos, Jim Walker and John Sturgis. Next to Sturgis is Miss Norris, class teacher.

The Caltrans Maintenance Highland Park road crew brought their equipment and know-how to Multnomah Elementary School in Los Angeles recently for their annual "Career Day." On hand to share their expertise with the enthusiastic kids were John Sturgis, Supervisor; Ray Villalobos, Leadworker; and Jim Walker, Equipment Operator. Other participants included the Los Angeles Police Department Mounted Unit, the Los Angeles Fire Department, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and others for a fun-filled, educational day for the local grade school.

What was most unique about the visit was that Villalobos graduated from Multnomah in 1970 and his five-year-old daughter, Maria, is a student there now. "My daughter is actually the third generation of our family to attend this elementary school," Villalobos said. "Two of my uncles also attended here. And it was wonderful to see my daughter and all her classmates on the same school grounds where I played over twenty years ago. It gave me a special feeling to be able to give back to the community and the school."

Since 1994, Sturgis and his helpful crew members have visited many elementary schools from Santa Clarita to Los Angeles. They bring along their fence trucks, loaders, sweepers and other equipment for an up-close and personal experience for the children. "We enjoy talking to the students,"

said Sturgis. "They really pay attention when we teach them about what Caltrans really does out there on the freeways; what the different signs mean; about the importance of not littering or doing graffiti; and about safety and how wearing seat belts saves lives." He added that while it is always great talking about Caltrans, they also talk about other state departments. "That way," Sturgis says, "when it is time for them to choose a career, we hope they will think about the State of California."

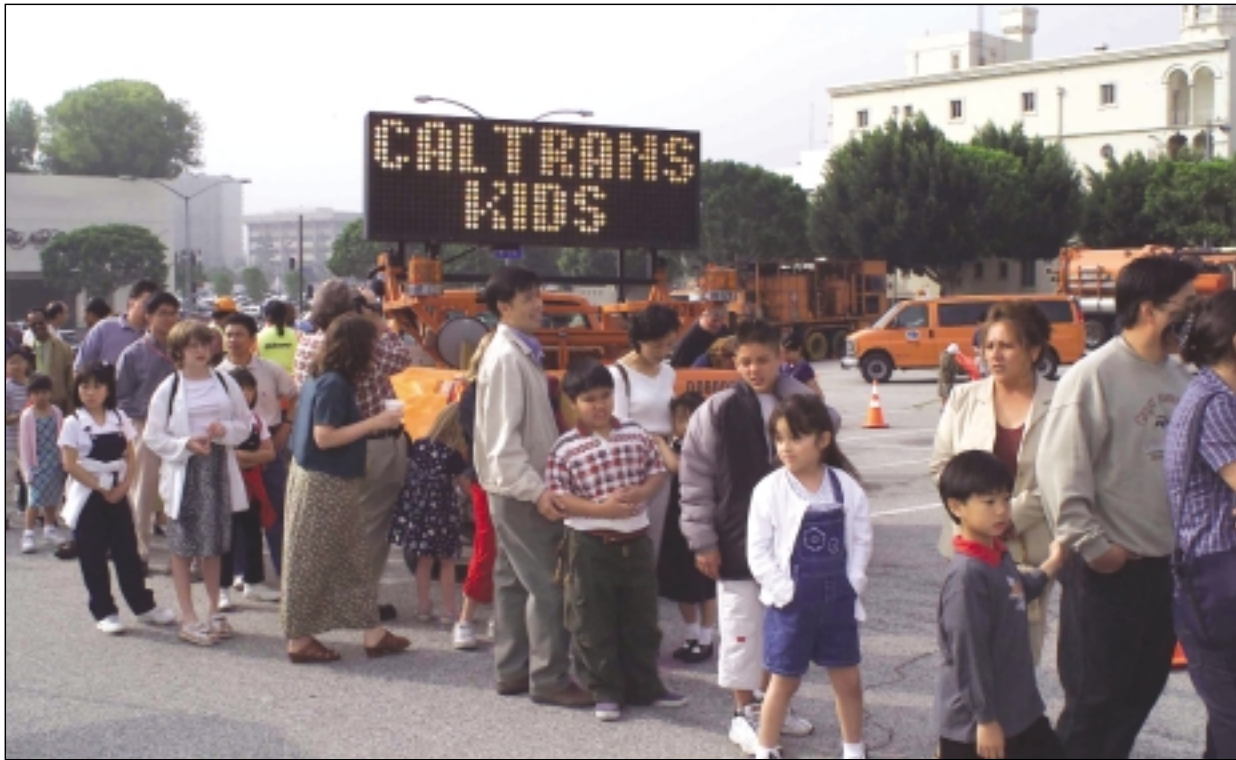
The Caltrans crew members always stress the importance of staying in school and getting a good education. "Chuck Webster, Maintenance Manager, North Region, is very supportive of the school program," said Sturgis. "Chuck spearheaded this effort and he continues to promote it. He feels strongly about reaching out to help and educate the communities we serve."

Caltrans would like to thank the students for being so polite and well-mannered. And they were all adorable in their miniature Caltrans hardhats. Caltrans also extends its appreciation to the Multnomah school for their kind invitation. It is always a pleasure for Caltrans to participate in promoting education and safety for students throughout California. •



Equal Opportunity Corner

"BRING A CHILD TO WORK DAY"



The Caltrans Main Street parking lot was transformed for "Bring a Child to Work Day" -- a great day of fun and education for Caltrans Kids.

By James Crouse, Equal Opportunity Officer

The fourth Thursday of April has become an annual tradition at District 7. It is "Bring A Child To Work Day." And on April 26 we shared this special day with the "Caltrans Kids" for the third time. In fact, this year's event was the largest and most successful yet, with over 300 children and their parents participating. The event provided an opportunity for parents to share with their children their pride in the work they do at Caltrans.

Presentations were made by the Office of Surveys and the Division of Maintenance which included various equipment demonstrations involving the children. Also on hand were members of the Los Angeles Fire Department who provided a hook-and-ladder truck and explained the kinds of equipment utilized in fighting fires. Caltrans Kids were given a tour of the Transportation Management Center and treated to an interactive video teleconference with other participating Districts statewide. A particular highlight for the younger

kids was an appearance by the multi-cultural superhero, Danger Man, who spoke to the children at lunch about safety and the importance of reading and staying in school.

"Bring A Child To Work Day" is coordinated by the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Office. The EEO Office wishes to express its appreciation to the Divisions who generously provided the equipment and personnel that was integral to this year's success. Planning for next year's event has already begun and the EEO Office anticipates a larger and more varied event. "Bring A Child To Work Day" provides a unique opportunity for the various Divisions within District 7 to work together in an informal way towards a unique goal. The EEO Office would like to issue a challenge to all Divisions to think about ways to showcase the important work they do and to participate next year so that "Caltrans Kids" are exposed to a fuller range of the vital roles Caltrans plays in the lives of all Californians.

For additional information, please call the EEO Office at (213) 897-3865. •

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

A "TRAFFIC JAM" LIKE NO OTHER



A musical "traffic jam." Left to right: Medardo De La Cruz, Greg Panos, Marquita Scott, Jesus Avalos and Cecilio Bariaga.

Unlike most commuters, four Caltrans employees and one of their friends don't mind getting into a traffic jam when not in the office. But this is a traffic jam like no other. The five are members of a band called, appropriately, "Traffic Jam." The jamming these five do is all together different than what one would ever find on California's freeways.

"Traffic Jam" assembled just two years ago when Information Systems Analyst Greg Panos, a guitarist and Medardo De La Cruz from Project Development, a saxophone and keyboard player, discovered their mutual interest in music. The two decided to get together after work one day and "jam." Along came Cecilio Bariaga from Traffic Design who played bass. Jesus Avalos, a friend of the group and drummer who works for the University of Phoenix, rounded out the foursome with a great sound. And with the recent addition of Marquita Scott, a Student Assistant

from Information Services, Traffic Jam rocks!

This "Traffic Jam" is truly a group that works together and plays together. Their first gig was at a Caltrans Construction Picnic, and through word of mouth they are kept busy. "We have played at weddings, fundraisers, small concerts and parties, and we even worked at a United Way Campaign," said Panos. The band plays jazz, rock, blues and contemporary songs — something for everyone.

"We all work together as a team," Panos added. "I guess that's what makes it fun. And we always discuss what we're going to do and in what direction we're headed." Whatever the case, the group hopes to be together for a long time. Whether working together in the Caltrans District Office, or playing for a live audience, "Traffic Jam" jams like no other! •

Deputy Directors

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Modeling, which includes working with the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) to develop the Regional Transportation Plan; Advance Planning which includes system planning and the delivery of Transportation Concept Reports; Goods Movement; Public Transportation and Rail programs; the delivery of Project Study Reports, Feasibility Studies and Corridor Studies; the Value Analysis Program; Intergovernmental Review /California Environmental Quality Act (IGR/CEQA); Environmental Engineering; the Local Assistance Program; Community Planning; and Geographical Information Systems (GIS). She now directs a staff of 250 planners, engineers and administrators and works in active partnership with all stakeholders to develop a balanced, connected multi-modal transportation system while also supporting capital and local project delivery for a multi-billion-dollar program. Casey plans to continue Caltrans' important efforts to support rail, transit and local agencies in delivering Governor Davis' Transportation Congestion Relief Program (TCRP).

One new focus area is the Community-Based Planning Branch which involves getting communities involved early on in the project planning process. Another emphasis is to work closely with regional and local agencies and owners and operators of alternate modes of transportation in developing better regional solutions to reduce congestion, increase mobility and improve connectivity between the different modes. "I feel very fortunate and am excited about my new position," Casey said. "It gives me a chance to have an impact and to improve the regional transportation system by working together with all partners and stakeholders."

Casey is currently working on improving the regional communication between the four Southern Districts covered by SCAG and is also working with her management team to revisit the Division's mission, vision and goals and look at the services provided within the District and externally to seek improvements.

Casey said she acknowledges the vital

and continued support of Robert W. Sassaman, District Director; Doug Failing, Chief Deputy District Director; and Headquarters management in her career as she carries out her new responsibilities. She is enthusiastic about working with her office chiefs and entire division as a team, encouraging open communication, accessibility and an environment which supports staff and continuous innovation with a partnership focus. She feels that communication and teamwork are key to achieving goals. "We will continue to enhance our communication internally within the Division, as well as externally," Casey said. "I want to use experience I've gained in the Southern Districts, Headquarters and with project management and project delivery to benefit Planning. The focus will be on action plans and implementation. We have excellent, committed staff in our Division with a wealth of knowledge and experience. I want to support the professional development of staff through mentoring and also through participation at conferences and professional organizations so they are exposed to regional, state and national issues in transportation and can engage in meaningful dialogue with others in order to develop the best solutions for California's future transportation system."

Ronald J. Kosinski, Caltrans' new Deputy District Director for Environmental Planning, has provided valuable leadership to the agency for more than two decades. Prior to his promotion, he was a Supervising Environmental Planner. Under his direction, the agency completed environmental documents for transportation projects costing in excess of \$2.8 billion. Formerly, he was also functional manager for Orange County projects including all clearances for projects along the Santa Ana Freeway (I-5), Pacific Coast Highway (1), as well as the High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) additions to Routes 55, 57, 91 and the San Diego Freeway (I-405).

In his current position, Kosinski manages 53 multi-disciplinary professionals who develop environmentally-sound transportation projects in the Los Angeles and Ventura regions. His Division is responsible for securing environmental approvals for all elements of the Governor's I-5 widening project, the I-

405 widening project, the Alameda East Rail Corridor and the agency's \$1 billion HOV plan.

Kosinski takes particular pride in seeing the realization of the Santa Ana Freeway (I-5) widening project in Orange County after many years of planning. Noted accomplishments also include the pending improvements on Routes 1, I-10, 71, 101, 138 and I-405 in Los Angeles County as well as Routes 23, 101 and 118 in Ventura County. He credits the knowledge and skills of his staff in moving the projects through the environmental process. "We have been blessed with excellent, quality people who have quickly learned the environmental laws and regulations and worked hard to achieve a successful delivery record," said Kosinski. "At the same time, these are creative people with new ideas and they are not afraid of working 'outside the box.'"

The Division is currently working with Right of Way on the purchase of 500 to 1,000 acres of Santa Clara River habitat that can be used as a mitigation land bank for future projects in West Los Angeles and Ventura Counties. This will enable expedited approvals of the numerous Caltrans transportation improvements needed in these areas.

Anticipated projects include a recently approved fish passage grant proposal that would restore the steelhead trout migration to Solstice Creek in Malibu. Caltrans Environmental Planning Division is working jointly with several agencies on this project which has major support and involvement of the District Director. "Robert Sassaman has been very supportive of our Environmental team," added Kosinski. "He has developed a positive atmosphere in the Executive Office that is spreading throughout the District."

Sassaman said, "Rose Casey and Ron Kosinski are both experienced transportation professionals proficient in their areas of expertise. I welcome them and look forward to working closely with them and the entire executive team as we continue to make vital improvements to the California freeway system to improve mobility for the motoring public."

Caltrans sends its best to Rose Casey and Ron Kosinski for continued success in their new assignments. •

Quality Corner

Caltrans THE LEADER IN QUALITY TRANSPORTATION

*Contributing Writer,
Godson K. Okereke,
District Quality Coordinator*

Quality in Caltrans (QIC) has actually contributed to making Caltrans an even better organization. Within the organization it is understood that Quality has no finish line. It is a never-ending road that the Department plans to follow. QIC creates an environment that relates to Caltrans employees, customers and business practices. Please visit the QIC web page, at <http://onramp.dot.ca.gov/quality> for a full statement on the QIC philosophy.

In keeping with the tradition of rotating the Quality Coordinator's responsibility in District 7, the Division of Maintenance has been assigned the duty of coordinating the District's QIC program this year. Godson Okereke, Senior Transportation Engineer in Maintenance Design, is the new District Quality Coordinator.

In addition to continuing existing teams, new teams such as the District 7 Strategic Objectives Tracking Team (SOTT) has been added to widen the application of quality in everyday business at the District. The process of monitoring established strategic objectives, through some performance criteria, ensures that Caltrans' goals are met or exceeded. In addition to the SOTT, other teams such as the Project Development Process Improvement Team, Lane Closure Activities Process Improvement Team and the Electrical Energy Conservation Team have been very active and dedicated to meeting their team goals. The District's Quality Web page, accessible at t7www.dot.ca.gov, has been improved upon to provide information on the Caltrans Mission Statement, teams, functions, etc. The Quality award application is now available on the same Web page. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) mandatory standards were met by creating a text version of all the Web pages, which can be accessed from the Quality home page.



Godson K. Okereke

The Division of Maintenance, led by its Deputy District Director Michael Miles, is moving the District's QIC program in the right direction, leading by example. Miles has given Maintenance employees the freedom to be innovative in the creation of positive changes in the way Caltrans does business, while keeping fundamentals intact. As a result, Caltrans has continued to improve on delivery time and the quality of end services. The Division of Maintenance believes in innovation, which is a product of continuous improvement and quality.

In an effort to improve the skill and knowledge of field employees, a state-of-the-art Maintenance training facility is currently under construction. The facility, located at the southwest corner of Imperial Highway and La Cienega Boulevard near the Glenn Anderson (105) Freeway in the City of Los Angeles, is expected to provide amenities such as video and computer equipment for classroom presentations, classrooms, conference rooms and simulators for training on the use of Maintenance heavy equipment vehicles. The training center was an idea developed as a solution for the need to certify field employees in the use of various classes of vehicles used in their daily work.

With quality in mind, the Division of Maintenance has stepped up its environmentally-friendly activities. Good examples are: reduction in herbicide usage in landscape projects and an increase in the number of electronically-controlled, computerized, irrigation systems to conserve water supply. The number of Landscape staff has been increased and a new position has been created for a Senior Landscape Architect. New construction of hardscape areas has also been recommended.

The creation of the Maintenance Agreements Database, currently in progress, is an integral part of the Maintenance Division's endeavor towards QIC. Work is currently in progress to digitize and store an electronic version of all Maintenance Agreements. This effort will tremendously reduce the amount of time spent in retrieving information from the database. The digitized database will be made more accessible by linking it to the Division's Web site at 10.56.21.111.

The Division of Maintenance is also involved extensively in the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) program. GIS is a collection of computer hardware, software, geographic data and personnel and organizational procedures designed to efficiently capture, store, update, analyze and display all forms of geographically-referenced information. The mission of the Maintenance GIS is to provide system support, GIS application creation, database support and policy guidance to enhance transportation information access and decision making for Division of Maintenance employees and partners through the use of GIS tools and integrated technology. Current projects include Pavement Condition Survey, Levels of Service and Maintenance's Ten-Year Pavement Plan and Agreements Database.

Okereke said, "I look forward to a year of continued application of the QIC efforts and an increase in employee participation in this vital Caltrans program." The best of luck to Godson Okereke as the new District Quality Coordinator. For additional information, please call (213) 897-0256. •

Introducing The Community-Based Planning Branch

The Caltrans Headquarters Office of Community Planning (OCP) was recently established to address a statewide need for community-sensitive approaches to transportation decision-making. A primary goal of OCP is to enhance the Department's leadership role in the development of community-based transportation planning. This will facilitate the development of transportation projects that enjoy public support.

The term "community-based planning" is used interchangeably with "Smartgrowth," "Livable Communities" and "New Urbanism." Livable communities are complete and integrated communities containing housing, shops, workplaces, schools, parks, and civic facilities essential to the daily life of residents. Community planning encourages proactive transportation and land use planning through the adoption of programs and policies that help create more livable and resource-efficient communities. Effective community planning results in the creation of communities that encourage people to walk, cycle and take transit as alternate forms of transportation. Some of the benefits include increased density; reduced infrastructure costs; increased affordable housing; improved air quality; increased natural resources and open space; increased public health and safety; improved local economic and social vitality; and increased transportation alternatives, such as light-rail, bus systems, bike paths and pedestrian walkways.

The newly created District 7 Community-Based Planning (CBP) Branch is a new departmental initiative that was established under the management of the Advance Planning Office managed by Office Chief Elhami Nasr. The CBP function, supervised by Wilford Melton, Senior Transportation Planner, will develop into a resource



Elhami Nasr, Office Chief of Advance Planning

center for the District on subjects including "Smartgrowth" and "Livable Communities." The branch's key objectives are:

- Increase visibility of Caltrans' commitment to community-based planning.
- Focus on integrating land use activities and decision-making with transportation planning and emphasize community values as input into the Department's mainstream planning activities.
- Develop credibility and trust with locals and partner with local elected officials to promote and implement community-based planning processes.
- Compile and share information regarding community-based planning; prepare public participation programs and resources; coordinate flexible design initiatives; participate in partnerships; and collaborate with externals.

The Caltrans decision-making processes from Planning, Design, Construction and Maintenance are much more open to public/community input. Nasr said, "We are asking our internal and external customers, 'What can we do for you?' And this pro-active approach to assist local agencies and the public is a win-win situation for all." For additional information, please contact Elhami Nasr at (213) 897-0227. •

Value Analysis

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spective with great opportunity to achieve significant, meaningful results. Having varied disciplines represented on the team is essential as "value" is not the responsibility of any one department or discipline, but is shared by all. And VA recommendations do not include cost reduction at the expense of project quality.

Team members apply VA processes and techniques to the project under study under the direction of a certified Team Leader. They are committed for the entire duration of the study. Team members follow instructions from the Team Leader and must complete all assigned tasks prior to the final day of the study. The ultimate goal of VA teams is to generate and analyze design alternatives and to determine the best alternative under the guidance of the study Team Leader.

"The VA program works because we improve performance and costs to get the best value for the traveling public," added Hunter. "At the same time we are working with our transportation partners through the VA study to gain consensus on the project in a short amount of time." El-Jamal invites all of the District 7 staff to take advantage of the VA process. "This process involves creativity, teamwork and the application of VA tools and techniques in order to get the best overall project value for the taxpayer," he said.

"We do such a good job with VA here at District 7," added Sassaman. "A lot of work goes into this. It's a great program to put our projects through because a lot of good ideas come out of it." "And," added El-Jamal, "we are asking everyone to get involved and provide valuable feedback regarding VA at Caltrans."

By continuously monitoring quality and by bringing together multi-disciplinary experts with designers and contractors, VA teams have been able to maximize the value of many projects. Caltrans says "thank you" to Raja Mitwasi, Mel Hodges, Jamal El-Jamal and all members of VA teams at Caltrans for their efforts in supporting this invaluable program. For additional information, please call (213) 897-0479. •

What's **Cookin' At Caltrans**

A FRUIT AND VEGETABLE SUMMER

ALL-AMERICAN BERRY PIZZA

From the *California Strawberry Commission*

- 1 package (18 oz.) refrigerated sugar cookie dough
- 1 cup blueberries
- 1 container (8 oz.) low-fat vanilla yogurt
- 1/2 cup whipping cream
- 1 pint basket California strawberries (12 oz.), stemmed/halved

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour bottom and side of 14-inch pizza-type pan. With floured hands, press cookie dough evenly into bottom of pan. Bake 14-16 minutes until golden. Run metal spatula or knife along edge of crust to loosen from pan. Cool in pan on rack. Beat whipping cream to form soft peaks; fold in yogurt. If made ahead, cover/refrigerate. Just before serving, spread cream mixture onto cooled crust. Arrange fruit decoratively over top; serve immediately cut into wedges.

SUMMER VEGETABLE QUICHE

From *www.southernfood.com*

- 12 cups trimmed fresh spinach leaves
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 3/4 cup chopped shallots
- 1 cup milk
- 3 plum tomatoes, seeded and coarsely chopped
- 2 eggs
- 3/4 cup shredded Monterey Jack cheese
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh dill
- 2 teaspoons grated lemon zest
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon each breadcrumbs and Parmesan cheese
- Freshly ground pepper to taste

Rinse spinach well and place in large saucepan with just the water that clings to the leaves. Place saucepan over low heat and stir to wilt spinach, 3-4 minutes. Drain well, squeezing out excess moisture. Chop coarsely and set aside. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Melt butter in skillet and sauté shallots over medium-low heat about 5 minutes until translucent. Set aside. Whisk together milk, eggs, cheese, dill, lemon zest, salt and pepper. Stir in spinach, tomatoes and shallots. Butter an 8-inch square baking pan. Add filling and sprinkle with breadcrumbs and Parmesan. Bake until golden 25 minutes.



IS PUBLISHED BY THE
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
DISTRICT 7 • EXTERNAL AFFAIRS UNIT
120 SOUTH SPRING STREET • ROOM 100
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012
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PHOTOGRAPHY **CALTRANS**
PRINTING **INTAGLIO**
DISTRIBUTION **IRMA LOPEZ**

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